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Northern Review

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- THE SEMINOLE CHIEF
  BANKSON MEANS
- FIVE POEMS
  WILLIAM BURNS
- PROPOSAL OF THE REPUBLIC
  DEAN CADLE

OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

JAMES REANEY, DOROTHY ROBERTS, JOHN A. LYNCH, JASCHA KESSLER, DON SILBERGER, ROBERT DeMARIA, THOMAS I. COOK, L. A. MacKAY, and NEUFVILLE SHAW

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The Seminole Chief

Bankson Means

Seems as if every day for the whole summer, the Vegetable sat out back of Harley's Feed and Grain. Not that he did anything — mind; he just sat there in the sun on the hard ground and traced pictures in the dust with those three-fingered hands of his. Maybe he thought he was Tecumseh, or Sitting Bull, or Osceola. But I don't think he thought at all. He just sat there in the hot sun, behind old Harley's Feed and Grain, and you could have run your buggy right over him and he probably wouldn't have bothered to look up. If I were Harley, I'd of hitched his feet to a mule and drug him way the hell away as he sure drew flies. But I guess he'd of come on back soon enough and Harley'd been stuck with him again. That's because he's a vegetable. Not the real garden patch variety, you know, but a vegetable just the same. He's the biggest boy I've ever seen — must be close to four hundred pounds — and hasn't got no mind at all. Defective, is what the doctor up to the county seat called him. Suggested Clive, his Pa, send him up to the state home in Macton. But Clive wouldn't go for that, worst luck. He figured he could use the boy on the farm — that was before he grew so big. Clive's a close man with his money and I guess he thought he'd have help forever with the boy and wouldn't have to hire none at harvest. Well, the joke was sure enough on Clive. And what's more, the home won't even take the boy now. He's too big!

The Vegetable can't even dress hisself or knows when to come in out of the heat and wet. He just knows how to eat, and even then he'll eat until he's sick, never knows when to stop. So he grew and he's still growing, and no store-bought clothes in the county have fit him for almost five years. So I guess Clive sure enough rues the day he said he'd keep the boy. Clive couldn't even teach him to plow. He use to hitch the Vegetable to the plow and give the mule a crack and off they'd go across the field. But that Vegetable, he'd just stumble along a few feet and sit down and let the mule drag him along until it was tired. Poor Clive not only had to hire help at harvest, but he had to spend half his time hieing after the boy and bringing him home from where ever he'd wandered to. Otherwise the Vegetable would just stay where ever he'd chosen to sit. Wouldn't even move to relieve

himself; he just sat where ever he was at, not moving more than to trace those lopsided pictures in the sand with his three-fingered hands. And with the law so close by now, Clive couldn't even end the boy's uselessness with a bullet.

Now the boys down to the mill one day, a year or so back, gave the Vegetable eight pounds of boiled potatoes and damned if he didn't clean the plate. They'd of given him more just to see the size of his stomach, but Clive's woman come by then and they had to leave off.

The Vegetable sat in the middle of my corn patch for three days last year and even Clive couldn't get him up. I finally had to hitch his feet to my team of mules and tow him off the land. Where he sat, the corn and grass was all bleached white from being without the sun those days.

Another time, the Vegetable was sitting out on the fair ground. Just sitting, not doing nothing. And a big old black snake came wiggling by on his way out to find a patch of shade to nap in. Well, that black snake come along up to the Vegetable and, since the Vegetable casts a pretty big shadow, he lay down up close to him and went to sleep. After maybe ten minutes or so, the Vegetable commences drawing them queer pictures in the dust and his hand comes up smack dab against the black snake. Well, the snake, being real sleepy, just doesn't move. Which was sure a mistake, anyway you look at it! Because next thing you know, the Vegetable has got his hands around the snake, reaches it up to his face and takes a big bite out of its tail! That sure enough woke up Mr. Snake and I don't mean maybe. It started riling around and lashing around and biting at everything it could touch. But it would take a lot more than that to bother the Vegetable. He just ate away. One bite after another. He just ate that poor black snake right up and spit out the head! And that snake was alive and fighting all the way down. Then the Vegetable recommenced his tracing of pictures in the sand.

Well, the day before yesterday, I come down to Harley's with a load of corn to be ground and there must have been quite a crowd there with the same idea, harvest being good as done. And the Vegetable was still a-sitting out back in the paddock, and the flies were buzzing all around, and I guess we were lucky that there was no wind blowing. Everyone was out on the porch that had finished their trading and was having a twenty-cent shot of 'shine to see them back along home. Well, I was set to leave when old Swede Andresson come riding up, his horse in a lather, looking like he'd run all the way from New Orleans without stopping. After we all had

asked who he killed and why he was running and such, he got his breath back and told us this:

Seems as how he'd been down to Patteson for the week as his sister was with child and called for his wife to help. And the other morning, a travelling circus come in and staked out in the fair ground for a two-day run. The reason he'd come back was that he'd spoken to the barker of that circus and seems as how up here in Adelaide was the next stop on the agenda.

Well, it sure didn't take long to put two and two together, and all of us ranged out to the back lot to see was the Vegetable still where we left him. Sure enough, he hadn't budged an inch in the last month. Guess that was the first time anyone of us were glad to see him. Now I'd stake my harvest to it, and I bet there wasn't a man amongst us but wasn't thinking just about what I was: Could we get Clive's consent — and that shouldn't be hard anymore — we could get free of the Vegetable by giving him to the circus. Maybe we could even make money on him!

Now circus managers are no fools, and we sure enough couldn't palm off the Vegetable the way he was. For one thing, he smelled strong enough so that no circus barker would come within a hundred feet of him could he help it. And for another, seeing the Vegetable as he was didn't offer up any particular reason for why a circus should even want him. As a fat man maybe, but that was all, and according to the Swede, this circus already had a fat man and a fat lady.

Guess old Harley had the best suggestion. He ought to; he'd been stuck with the Vegetable the longest and, had there been another feed store nearby, his business would have dropped off *some* time ago. Besides, this circus seemed the answer; Harley and all of us would be rid of him for good now.

Now Harley considers himself somewhat of a town historian. Him, and his Pa, and his Grandpa before him have had this business before there was even a town here. His Grandpa use to fight the Seminoles when they come up out of the swamps to raid the white man and set fire to house and crops. This here feed store was a fort, then, and when the Indians were sighted, every family that could come, brought their livestock with them and come to the store here to fight off the Indians. Up in the loft, Harley's got real genuine Seminole blankets and arrows and shields. He has an old daguerreotype of Osceola, the Seminole Chief, that scalped three hundred white men before he was captured. And another of his Pa posing with one of Osceola's children — Parabaque. Parabaque was mighty famous hisself

up until he had a jug of raw corn. Then he got such a craving for it, he sold all his wives and his clothing and, in the end, he chopped off his fingers and sold them as souvenirs just to buy another jug. There are maybe only fifty Indians left in this state that are full-blooded, genuine Seminoles. And they've been driven down into the black swamps with the alligator and the quicksand. Sometimes, on gator hunts, you see them squatting in the bush watching you or slithering through the trees. Sort of spooky and it don't pay to hunt gator alone. A man who goes into the swamps by his own self don't generally come out. But most of the Indians that were left after Parabaque died have mixed with the poor whites and have moved down to the Gulf to fish.

Harley figured we'd do best should we palm off the Vegetable as a Seminole Chief lately discovered in the swamp, and kept in captivity by us. Such an idea wasn't easy to carry out as the Vegetable was fair-haired and fair-skinned like his Pa. But Harley had the matter most ways figured out. He'd even give over one of his prized blankets and a shield and his only quiver and arrows just to be rid of the Vegetable. We had to dye his hair and skin to Indian color and get his parents to give their consent. It was Harley's estimation that the ladies of Adelaide should act toward the persuading of Clive's woman and the deacon of our church should see to Clive.

As for dying the Vegetable to Indian color, Harley got together the town's fiercest chewers, handed them free squares of tobacco, and set down a tub in front of them and made them chew all day. And he dispatched Teddy Long to Macton to bring back a big jar of Boot Black, a commodity his store had never seen fit to carry.

The rest of us lined up by the water trough with milk pails and formed a chain line to clean up the Vegetable. First we dumped maybe twenty buckets of water on him. Then me and Sam took to him with long-handled brushes and a strong soap and lye solution. The Vegetable didn't budge. Might as well have been dead for all the effect it had on him. His clothes we stripped off with fire pokers and flung them aside where two other fellows poured kerosene on them and set them to fire. More water was passed up and thrown on him and thirty men labored through the heat of midday in the hot sun of the paddock to make the Vegetable clean. Many of us worked harder at this time of day than we'd ever done before in our lives so as to make a Seminole chief out of the Vegetable. We worked and we sweated and we drank warm water, but no one left the task they'd been allotted for the cool shade of the porch and an ice-cold tonic. And it wasn't

until we'd emptied maybe a hundred more buckets over the Vegetable's head and left him naked and steaming that we came back to the veranda and waited for the sun to burn him dry.

As we all sat around and had cold tonics on the house, we waited for the deacon to report on his meeting with Clive and for the women to return from talking with Clive's woman. And while we sat in our tiredness and our sweat, old Harley set our children together, fashioning human-looking scalps from an old motheaten mule hide.

We had to wait to nearly sundown for the ladies to return from their visitation. But the way they came along, singing out ' Salvation's at the Door with Jesus ' and ' I was Cold and Lonely until Jesus Locked Me in His Heart,' and several other songs — I forget all of what they were singing away — we all knew our afternoon's work wasn't wasted. Of course, we had to wait for Clive's word, him being master of the house, but we'd been most worried over his woman. She'd come close to liking the Vegetable — after all, he was her flesh and blood, heavens preserve us — and she might not have wanted to part with him. It was possible that she'd want him to stay to home. But he never was home! The ladies made her see that. They persuaded her as to how he'd like the circus; how it would be a treat for him. I don't reckon he even noticed, to tell the truth, but there was no reason to say that to her. Let her think he'd be happy. We sure enough were, every man jack.

And Harley, he was so pleased with the ladies that he brought out a big can of snuff and distributed it round and broke out more cold tonics for the ladies. And we all sat around and hummed and sang and drummed our feet on the floor and waited for the deacon.

And a short while later, the deacon walked up and gave us the good news. Seems it took four jugs of prize corn and a lot of fancy talk of a father's duty to his child before the deacon got Clive tight enough to sign out his consent. Then the deacon helped Clive down to the river to sober him up and then to the church so Clive could tell the Lord of how he'd done right for the boy. Clive is a real religious man!

Having Clive's consent in the pocket as it were, we all gathered up our women and children and went along home, promising to be back first light of the morning to dye the Vegetable to Seminole color.

I was off to Harley's soon as I'd milked the cows and et my breakfast. Early as it was, I wasn't the first to the paddock. Several men had already dragged the tub of tobacco juice out towards the Vegetable and

Harley was already around reminding everyone of us not to spill the juice as it was real precious stuff. The next minute Teddy Long come by with the Boot Black. Harley brought out some big house-painter brushes and we set to.

First off two men were assigned, by Harley, to pull the Vegetable's arms back so he'd be in a lying-down flat position. This was so it would be easier for us brush-men to paint all of him. He'd been sitting in his hunched-up cross-legged way so long it sounded as if we were tearing him in two, his bones creaked so when they moved him. But we got him flattened out on the ground and commenced our painting of him with the tobacco juice the men had chewed up the day before. Harley stood right over to us to see that we didn't make too free with the juice. He wanted there to be enough for a second coat should there be need. When we'd painted all of the front and both sides down to the dirt line, several of us heaved the Vegetable over and rolled him onto a tarpaulin — put there so he wouldn't get covered with paddock dust where we'd painted him. Then we recommenced painting his backside. All this time, the Vegetable didn't say a thing or make a motion. He opened his mouth once and got a taste of tobacco juice for his trouble. After that he screwed his eyes shut so we couldn't get no juice in them and puckered up his mouth. After we'd covered him from head to toe, several of the men laid hold of his arms and heaved him upright so we brush-men could get at any of the places we might of missed. Never do to have a spotted Seminole ; he had to be real genuine-looking. Then we tied him up to the snubbing post to dry while we all had ourselves a spot of 'shine.

When Harley had judged him dry, we cut the Vegetable down and got him to sit cross-legged like an Indian sits. Teddy Long set down the Boot Black that he'd been warming by the stove so it would spread easy, scooped out a handful of the black grease and started pasting it all over the Vegetable's hair. Because Clive's woman insisted on cutting the Vegetable's hair every few months, it wasn't long enough to braid. So we had to get Harley's wife to make two braids out of a mule tail. After all that, my wife tied her prized red satin ribbon into bows for the braids. They were real nice looking.

With the Vegetable now looking like a Seminole in color, even though he was as naked as a jay-bird, we laid off further preparations for dressing him until we could be sure the circus was near at hand. We didn't want him dirtying up Harley's prize Seminole blanket.

Then Harley brought the blanket down from the loft and the real genuine breechclout Parabaque had worn when he died, and the arrows with their queer stone heads, and the shield with the funny-looking bird on it, and the string of human scalps the children had made from a motheaten mule hide. And we piled them on the back porch. And Sam set to making a false wall with a couple of two by fours and some warped planks and left a slit in it so he could stand behind the wall and not be seen by anyone in front. This was so he could give the Vegetable — who'd be sitting in front of the wall — a couple of pokes with a pitchfork every so often to make him grunt. The Vegetable can't talk. Leastwise, not so he can be understood. He mumbles sometimes in a high womany voice which all of a sudden cracks and he can just grunt, low and hog-sounding. Doesn't any of it make any sense, which is just as well for we were able to pass it off as Indian talk. Sam wanted to be sure he'd talk or at least grunt while we were making the sale with the circus. And should he commence drawing them lop-sided pictures in the sand, Harley said we could say he was calling up Indian Spirits to work a hex on us. Harley, he did all the explaining of the pictures and of the Vegetable's grunting and mumbling. We were just supposed to add ' silent weight,' according to Harley.

Well, along about the middle of the forenoon, one of the children sent out by Harley as a watcher come tearing in to say that the circus had been sighted down to Bleeding-Heart Creek watering their horses and elephants. Bleeding-Heart being only six miles south, we didn't have much time, so Harley dispatched a couple of the ladies to round up Clive's woman and keep her out of the way while we contracted business with the circus over the Vegetable. This was a precaution in the case that she should have the misfortune to have a change of heart. And he got two of Clive's favorite drinking partners, gave them for free a three-gallon jug apiece, and told them to get the hell up to Clive's place and take him out of town for a three-day drunk. Clive is awful fractious when he's likkered up and it's best to get him out of the county even so he can't do no damage. With all that done, we now had a clear field for getting rid of the Vegetable with no worries of interference.

We all bundled the blankets and the beads and the scalps and other paraphernalia out to the middle of the paddock and set them down close by the Vegetable. Four men hauled him up to a standing position while we tied on the breechclout and the string of mule-skin scalps. Then we hung the blanket over his fat shoulders and lowered him down easy to the ground.

Harley brought out a strip of cured alligator hide which we wrapped around his head to keep the braids down close to his head. The braids had stiffened when the glue dried and stuck out straight without something to keep them in place. We hung a few strings of beads around his neck and hung the quiver of arrows and the bow and shield over his shoulders. Teddy Long dipped into what was left of the Boot Black to paint the Vegetable's face so he'd look like Harley's picture of Osceola. And Harley sent a boy to the creek behind the mill for a handful of red and grey clay to mark the Vegetable's face also.

After we'd got the Vegetable dressed — and he sure looked like a Seminole Chief when we were done with him, it would be hard not to be fooled — we tied a rope around his middle and hauled him over to the fence Sam had made. We set him square in front of the slit, through which Sam would poke him with a pitchfork to make him grunt, untied the rope and paddled the blanket with a broom to get the dust out of it. Harley came back out to view our work then and to put a hobble on the Vegetable's feet so he wouldn't take a notion to rise and leave.

The rest of us, except Sam, gathered in our scattered children and wives and went along home. The whole town, generally, turns out for a circus train. They come so seldom it's a real treat and for as far back as I can remember, we always meet them as they come down the valley road by Harley's Feed and Grain and the children lead them to the fair ground. And the barker always stays in a room above the store that Mrs Harley makes up for visiting preachers, barkers, and once, for the mayor of Macton.

We were all lined up on the front veranda of Harley's when the first circus truck creaked and swayed into view around the bend. It was a big yellow and red striped truck covered with dust and mud and held the fat man and fat lady, a bearded lady, and some tent props. Looked like there were a pair of midgets in the cab. Leastwise you could see two balding heads just about level with the bottom of the window frame. Next come a team of four black horses with red feathers stuck in their halters. They were hauling a big red cage holding a wildcat, two sad-looking lions and a bony leopard. After this come three more horses, white this time with green feathers stuck in their halters, pulling a yellow cage of monkeys and a big old baboon. Then another truck come along full of people, clowns and trapeze people, I guess. Next comes the band. They had a big gold drum, three trombones, a tuba, and one real pretty girl dressed all in white and gold who walked at the head of it and played the fife. The band wore

purple and gold suits and green top hats. They played real well considering as how they must of had to eat dust all the way from Patteson on account of walking so close behind the clowns' truck. Then come two elephants dragging a wagon full of the tents, props, poles and so forth. There were two spotted dogs perched on the load and they had green paper ruffs around their necks. All the children come down off the porch then and run off to catch up with the lead truck and show the way to the fair ground across town. We adults waited for the barker.

Sure enough, maybe ten minutes after the caravan had passed, along came the barker in a yellow and violet striped Pierce-Arrow. He stopped right in front of the porch and got out. The barker was a good big man, all red and purple in the face from hard drinking. He was wearing a purple satin vest with big gold buttons, a black tail coat, a yellow shirt with a black string tie, and a white and green striped top hat. Looking at him, I felt sort of dirty and foolish in my Sunday clothes. He surely was a picture of color and worldliness. But I felt better when Harley stepped out to meet him. Harley had dolled himself up in a stiff-fronted shirt, a coat like the barker's and striped pants. He looked just like the mayor up to the county seat. If Adelaide were a big enough town for a mayor, Harley would probably have been picked. He is real elegant looking!

Like most of the circuses that come this way, the barker was owner and manager of the circus. Harley, as was fitten and proper, offered him a bed for the time the circus would be in town and, after we had all shaken hands, he had a drink of 'shine and then another. Then Harley's woman took him up to the room she'd fixed that morning to let him wash up and we all sat down below and waited for him to come back down so Harley could tell the story of how we'd captured a Seminole Chief in the swamp and kept him a captive for this circus.

We didn't have to wait long for the barker to make another appearance. Mrs Harley had put a little salt in his drinking pitcher upstairs so that he'd be thirsty for more 'shine when he came down. Old Harley had really sewed up every angle. Thinking that the barker might be a hard man to deal with, Harley'd figured that getting him likkered up would help swing the sale, or gift — no one really expected a sale. We'd be glad enough just to be rid of the Vegetable forever. Harley had given us our orders while the barker was upstairs. We were to fill up his glass every time it ran low from a special jug Harley had salted.

The sun was getting down toward the tree line when Harley judged

it time to talk about the Vegetable. He started off telling the barker about how he and several of us set off on a gator hunt a few weeks back. Being it was mid-summer and hot enough to roast an ox, we had to go fairly deep into the swamp to find gators. Well, as we were moseying along down a creek in our boat, we come onto a camp on a sand bar that had just been vacated in a hurry. The fire was still cooking a coupe of catfish and hadn't been scattered around enough to burn itself out. We, of course, figured it might be poachers hunting on our territory so we lit out after whoever it was had made the fire. After crashing around in the brush and all, we find tracks and stop dead. An arrow bangs into the ground in front of Harley! We all take cover. Since nothing happens, we creep up on hands and knees. Right ahead in a clump of bushes we find this here Indian Chief stringing another arrow unto his bow. Harley draws a knife on him and Sam levels his rifle. Then we all yell like crazy. The Chief, seeing as how we got the drop on him, gives up. Then Harley was finished. He told it much better than I can, of course.

All of us could see that the barker was really took in! He'd hung onto every word, breathing quiet-like so it wouldn't interfere with his hearing. He was really listening all the way! When Harley stopped, he asked right out where the Chief was now; did we catch him, did we kill him, had we his skin or his scalp? Well, said Harley, all cool and calm-like, we could even oblige the barker with a Seminole Chief in person. That we'd captured him; had him out in the paddock right now; tied so he couldn't light out and not fed much so he'd be easy to control.

When the barker heard that, he come down off the porch like a ball of fire and off he went, with Harley at his heels, to view a real, genuine, full-blooded Seminole Chief. And all of us come running after. I was worried for a minute that Sam might of got tired waiting and gone off for a while and how would we be able to get the Vegetable to grunt without the barker seeing us poke him. But soon as we got up close and the barker was standing almost on top of the Vegetable — he was that curious — the Vegetable grounted. And I knew Sam was there. It was a good, low hog-sounding grunt and you could see the barker was impressed.

Harley pointed out the genuineness of the blanket, showed off the string of scalps tied around the Vegetable's middle, pointed to the markings on the Vegetable's face; and his voice was full of pride, like when he was showing off a prize steer at the county fair. And the barker took it all in and pinched the blanket and looked at the arrows and pinched the Vegetable

and heard him grunt, and he stood back aways and looked at the Vegetable from several angles. Oh, he was impressed, real impressed!

And when the Vegetable commenced drawing them lop-sided pictures in the paddock dust, Harley told the barker how these pictures were telling a story. That the Chief was telling the Spirits how his braves were going to scalp all the white men around and give this land back to his people and how the Chief was using these pictures as signs to get the Spirits to help him. Harley showed the barker his daguerreotype of Osceola and allowed as how this here Chief was probably a son or grandson of Osceola. He recited a lot of stories of the scalpings and murderings that Osceola had done. How he stole little children and butchered them to eat or for sacrifices to the Indian Spirits. Oh, Harley really laid it on thick. He was wound up! But you could see the barker was impressed. He was really impressed!

And the Vegetable grunted again and tried to get up and twisted and mumbled something. And the barker looked at the shield and examined an arrow and looked at the Vegetable some more and pinched him again so he'd grunt. Then he looked around at all of us and at Harley, and he asked Harley if he might perhaps consider selling him this Seminole Chief, that he'd be right pleased to have him as part of the show. And Harley said, well, he'd think it over, and that made the barker even more anxious to buy.

And just then, in come one of the boys Harley had sent off some time back and he was bringing with him a hell of a big old milk snake — it must have been close to four feet long. And he put that snake down into the Vegetable's hands, carefully, so the barker could see just what he had done. And Harley mentioned, casually, as how all Seminoles ate reptiles, but that only chiefs ate snakes. Chiefs ate snakes because they were some sort of god, and to eat one made you like a god, holy and all that. And sure enough the Vegetable's hands closed down over this here snake, what was almost four feet long, and he squeezed it hard while it lashed and riled around. And the Vegetable raised it to his mouth — just like he'd done with the black snake out on the fairground, and Lord knows how many poor snakes — and took a big bite out of its tail. And the barker moved up close and we all made way so he'd have a good view, and his mouth come open and he just stood there and watched. And a fly flew right into his mouth and out again and that barker didn't even choke, or spit, or close his mouth. He just fastened his eyes on the Vegetable. And the Vegetable ate away. He ate that milk snake right up to the head — all four feet of it — and then

he grunted again and sat back and closed his eyes. And the barker watched him for a long time before he stepped back. Then the barker turned to Harley and said he sure enough wanted to have the Seminole Chief in his circus and would Harley name a price that wouldn't be too dear.

Well, Harley paced up and down the paddock like he was figuring out a good price and all of us just stood around grinning and trying not to. Nobody really hoped to make money on the Vegetable.

After Harley'd paced the paddock twice around, he come over to where the barker was standing and allowed as how thirty dollars would be a good enough price. You could see the barker was surprised; he'd probably hoped the price would be less, but thirty dollars was a good round sum and anyone with half an eye could see that a real, genuine, full-blooded Seminole Chief that can draw maps and grunts and ate a whole milk snake four feet long was a prize package and a sure-fire drawing card for any circus. So the barker paid up. He studied the Vegetable over careful again before he paid. And Sam made the Vegetable grunt a few more times. And the barker looked at the string of scalps again, and the arrows with their queer stone heads, and the shield with the funny-looking bird on it, and then he closed the deal and paid over thirty crisp one-dollar bills to Harley. And Harley offered to deliver the Chief to the field right away where the circus was staying. So the barker got into his yellow and violet striped car and drove away.

And all of us took the hobbles off the Vegetable and hauled him up straight and eight of us heaved him into my wagon bed and we rode him over to the field where the circus was staying. And there we gave the hobbles to the barker so that the Vegetable wouldn't take a notion to leave.

When we got back to the Feed and Grain, Harley brought out a dollar's worth of 'shine for each of us and we all got drunk. And Harley made a little speech of congratulations to all of us and promised that for twenty-nine more Sundays we would all have a dollar's worth of 'shine on Harley and celebrate the loss of our Seminole Chief.

Five Poems

'BE OF GOOD CHEER: IT IS I'

The boy stands high in his bird-ringed whistling day
As clouds roll over the sun, shading the tree
He hugs to hear the clifftop music play:
A boy up waiting, eyes that gather the sea.

Out over his town, the bouncing bells of noon,
The ringing churchyard walls and fishermen's graves,
He stands between the clouds and the sea's big tune
And God-high thunder dives to spiraling waves.

And how he laughs from the pounded shore of his heart
As all his birds go down in bristling twirls,
The sea drives high, the clouds like wrestlers start
To grip and flash with lightning nerves, and whirls

Of rain-wet wind blow singing out of heaven,
And how he pumps and pumps his lungs to make
Them throw his voice where tiny boats are driven
True to the cove, lifted steep in the tide's take.

A boy up high on the singing hill of his youth
And dancing footprints down on the cliff's wet knuckle,
His wind-laughing brothers billowing home from the clean truth
Of their labor: and One who walks where big seas buckle.

San Jose Del Cabo, 1953.

POET BY DANCELIGHT

And while he dreamed of great-striding violet dogs
With bellies taller than a leopard's leap, with heads
As high as thought on tiptoe strains through fog;
And out of the jungle, across the flashing sand,
With green children the color of hope astride
And rollicking-riding out to Life, that island
Lying low in the rising shipless seas

Wrung out of the twisted winds of history;
Big-walking Christ of old, sunning ahead,
A prance of martyrs polishing smooth the sea,
Gold-throated gulls and dogs with violet hair,
Ingenious children with dykes in their Life-aimed stare. . . .

This while he was drunk, was said to be — or crazy —
Although he drank but little, seemed harmless enough,
But would not dance, would hum strange tunes and sing
Of life, of God, and sometimes even love —
This while the lights revolved hypnotic rings,
The zombie dancers, uniform and tame,
With smiles in all the proper moves went by,
In time, in time, dancing all the same,
The same blue walls were echoing all the same
The same thin walls were shuddering all the same
The same thin walls were cracking all the same
Were echoing cracking splitting all —
A single dreaming man went wildly sane.

THE WAY OF THE CROSS: THE FIFTEENTH STATION

Machined-up villains now, with celluloid guns.
A target audience here in the purchased gleam,
Devouring canned courage and strong-popped corn,
Aroused to bravado by a manufactured dream.

Erotic with a public moll, they dribble lust
And licorice down the twisted limelit tracks
Toward a smooth oblivion, the commercial end.
Arise the victors; heroes with kinks in their backs

And zeroed-out minds where I heard the holes go through.
They stumble out of the blueness into the shroud-
Black dark around them, and so live ever
Though the Son burn all our nights away and every cloud.

The cultural graveyards fill, time runs off
The reels, slow-circles the relative dial
Of a geiger now . . . and when was that other theatre,
That other death, and greatness all the style?

TIME OF THE MULTIPLE MOTHER

Between Ash Wednesday and a postponed Easter Eve,
Before the time of lilies and the sun-filled tomb,
The soul in quest seeks through the body's eyes;
A muscled stare bends to the world's curve
And this season's pain. All the sharpened stars
Are out like prongs and the sky sheds violet wind;
The moon goes jaundiced, yellowing in the march
Of Judas armies looming toward tomorrow.
Angry eye of the moon, man, his straining soul,
The vultures dreaming wild in the purple hills,
All caught in the practiced dark before
A high-noon dawn and a human Calvary:
And fresh shadows shudder in the blue garden
Under the green silence of an olive tree.

In the long ache of perpetual Lent,
Extended to include all possible victims,
How many sons of Man can you count, Caesars,
Held-over Herods, to die again for your sins?

See, then:
Protesters stand massed in the world's square,
Their eyes like violets drowned in the crying springs
Of a Gethsemani vision. They are the Madonna, multiplied,
And strong, O strong, and not to be solaced.

And there is no demand for good thieves this time

Between Ash Wednesday and a postponed Easter Eve,
Before the time of lilies and the sun-filled tomb.

BESTIARY

Myth-singing blackbirds blow, blow down the noon
Out there, O there in the dance of the windy day
Gone wild with song and the wild sun-polished tune
Of chasing wings over the wind-harping trees
And the strumming rivers and the cymbal fall of seas;
O free birds weave their myth and spin and say
Their whistling truth around my noon-old cell,
My thirty bone-hard bars of years, my flesh
Laid thick around me, walling my private yell
Within, within, until, caught in a mesh
Of personal noise I choke in my own taut voice,
And free birds mock — spring loose, O man, rejoice!

Who made a prison cell of you, O man,
To be at once the bars and the beast within,
Who curved your upright soul and hammered in
The ought of self? You, and your brother beast
In the next cell battering, how shall you be released?

O brother beast, once human, battering away
In your fleshy cell, on the environmental cage
Of you, and you the beast inside, O they
Of whom the free birds sing and mock our rage,
O they will gnaw our hearts, by bit by bit,
Unless . . . until we know the whole of it.

So watch the wild birds now, rollick down the sky,
A plunge of song to rake a stifled ear,
O listen, listen, my brother beast, and I
Shall listen, and our billion brothers far and near:
O men and cages and beasts within, all three,
O you who barred yourselves, each one's a key.

William Burns

Towards the Last Spike:

the Treatment of a Western Subject

James Reaney

Western Canada figures largely in *Towards the Last Spike* and it is one of the potential riches of Western Canada that it is and can be the subject matter of such an attractive brilliant poem — that its history, its physical characteristics and the way both these things have affected Canada's development should be so filled with patterns and situations that attract the artistic eye.

First of all I would like to discuss Dr. Pratt's poem by itself and show what interesting things he has done with the western subject of building the first Transcontinental Railway in Canada. Secondly, I would like to draw some general conclusions about the Canadian poet or artist and his Canadian subject matter. These general conclusions will perhaps be seen to rise out of the following discussion of *Towards the Last Spike.*

As a theme, the building of a railway across a continent grows quite logically out of the rest of Pratt's work. In some shape or other there is a railway and a continent in all of Pratt's longer poems. In an early narrative poem, *The Great Feud,* a she-ape, after starting the most ferocious conflict between land animals and sea animals, retires from the doomsday she's created with the knowledge that love was the solution, not hate, and not even the love-with-an-end-in-view that exists among allies. In *The Great Feud,* and also in *The Cachalot,* Pratt shows his interest in the various orders and phases of evolution. There are the animals who remain sulking in the sea — sharks and krakens; there are the animals who remain half land, half sea, and lastly there are those Iroquois, Jesuits, and Sir John A. Macdonalds who have climbed up on land. Generally speaking, the trend seems to be towards less chaos and more order; the sea is filled with grotesque mishap like that described in *The Cachalot,* where a whale devours a kraken, then a whaling ship tries to get the whale, then both whale and whaling ship destroy each other and only the sea could be said to be triumphant. On land the different way, the more organized way space is arranged sees to it that struggles end more meaningfully. In *Brebeuf and His Brethren,* for example, the Iroquois successfully massacre the Jesuit

missionaries and their Huron converts, but the suffering they have caused is something that will have meaning for generations and lands the Iroquois cannot touch. All of the world's life, then, advances a sort of railroad of increased complication, intelligence, and ability to communicate over a continent of brute simplicity, ignorance, and silence. In *The Great Feud* land fights sea and only begins to win the struggle when one of the land animals conquers its own hate; the sea is behind us in *Brebeuf and His Brethren,* but some human beings are closer to its barbarous simplicity than others and act accordingly; the Iroquois, like so many sharks, devour the more warm-blooded Jesuits; in Pratt's poem about the *Titanic,* the sea, the horrors of chaotic uncomprehending Nature are within us. Long before the great ship hits the iceberg, the most inhuman fragment of Nature there can be, it has hit another sort of iceberg, a mental one, that of proud complacent stupidity, a stupidity that cancels out the civilisation the ship carries. In all these ways Pratt examines the theme of civilisation against Nature, love against evil or what you will. And this is the theme of *Towards the Last Spike,* in which a disordered country, Canada in 1871, disordered because of its grim natural features which always will work against its unity, disordered also because some of its leaders distrust imagination, finds order and a new understanding of itself by building a railroad.

By the way, *Towards the Last Spike* is not at all the usual poem about the usual pioneer struggle. Quite often our ancestors struggled with Nature, chopped down all the trees and became ferociously successful apparently. Looking at an old family album, however, you often wonder if they did conquer Nature or did the process change them into the tyrannical twisted shapes of the very trees they had been fighting against. In this poem Pratt is always careful to show the struggle against Nature, against the Rockies and the North Shore of Lake Superior as a struggle against something inside the human mind as well as something outside it. Sir John A. Macdonald and Van Horne are always struggling with their own inability to express their vision in words so that other minds will be persuaded of its truth. This is the real struggle, the attempt to make words conquer all that is unknown. The transcontinental railroad has to be built painfully in people's minds as well as in their country. The poet's success in showing how the railroad grew in and out of human minds — Macdonald's mind, Van Horne's mind — removes the poem from the bank mural category, a category in which thousands of brawny young men hack away at large mountains of rock and the general effect is one of rock cutting away at rock.

I think a great many Canadians wish there was something a bit more complicated in our history than the fur trade and the wilderness-shopping. But under the artist's eye these seemingly simple patterns can become very many-sided and ironical indeed.

I wonder what historians think of *Towards the Last Spike*. In the poem the struggle to build the railroad in the 1870s and 80s is seen as being the sort of struggle against a monstrous force that Brebeuf undertook against the Iroquois of the seventeenth century. In many ways this is a new view of how the C.P.R. was built, for historians whose work is a rational science tend to state simply the difficulties of the terrain — the wilderness of rock and muskeg north of Lake Superior, the mountains in British Columbia. And then historians examine the political situation — the financial scandal, the fighting free of American control, the lack of interest on Britain's part; the fact that British Columbia, if the railway scheme had petered out, might have joined the States. Historians also discuss, I believe, the fact that Canada is a rather illogical concept, or was; it can easily be seen as a series of separate vertical extensions of trade-areas to the south of us, or it can be seen with more difficulty as a horizontally unified country, Vancouver connected with Halifax. This is history and it is interested in things as they actually happened or could be — common sense reality. But a poet is allowed a view of another reality deep at the source of human consciousness where primeval Canada, primeval Europe, the primeval world are one and the same interesting monster who through the course of time assumes so many different masks. At this source, Sir John A. Macdonald, Elizabeth I whom he is rather like with Louis Riel as his Mary Stuart, Andrew Jackson, the questing knights of King Arthur's Court are one and the same opponent of this monster. The poet from this centre of knowledge works outwards, and sometimes as here he meets the historian, the historian who has to work inward from his mounds of rational evidence. The poet in writing about the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway can take imaginative leaps that the historian does not have to take. When Dr Creighton in his *Dominion of the North* says, describing the country north of Lake Superior, ' gaunt shoreline — ungainly masses of Pre-Cambrian rock — tattered jack pines,' Dr Pratt says:

> On the North Shore a reptile lay asleep —
> She lay snug in the folds of a huge boa
> Whose tail had covered Labrador and swished
> Atlantic tides, whose body coiled itself
> Around the Hudson Bay, then circled up north

Through Manitoba and Saskatchewan
To Great Slave Lake.

This folded reptile was asleep or dead:
So motionless, she seemed stone dead — just seemed:
She was too old for death, too old for life.

Anyone who looks at a geological map of Canada may now see this reptile if they like, or they can just see the Pre-Cambrian Shield. A lot of people get tricked by the Pre-Cambrian Shield every year, but not so many should find Pratt's reptile attractive.

The historian, Dr Creighton, can underline the fact that the syndicate which built the railway was dominated by a group of Scottish Canadian names ' from Montreal the ancient capital and controller of the North West.' Pratt not only underlines but poetically exaggerates this sky high:

Oatmeal was in their blood and in their names.
Thrift was the title of their catechism.

He goes on to describe all this oatmeal as causing eyebrows ' to come out as gorse, the beards as thistles.' When Donald Smith finally, in the Eagle Pass, hammers in the last spike, he is thus described:

The Scot invoking his ancestral clan
Using the hammer like a battle-axe,
His eyes blood-shot with memories of Flodden
Descended on it, rammed it to its home.

The mention of the battle Flodden produces a thought and a turn here to the story of the railroad impossible to an historian. At first one wonders why the poet has Smith remember this great Scottish defeat at the moment of the victorious last spike. I think what Pratt means here is that in the New World a great many of the old battles fought in Europe, battles that restricted nations like the Irish and Scottish nations, these battles are fought over again here in new terms and with results that perhaps compensate for some of the past oppression and some of the past defeats like Flodden.

Two other purposeful distortions of history in Pratt's poem should be noted. One of them has to do with British Columbia and the other with Sir John A. Macdonald. In the poem — obviously no historian would do this although the Canadian cartoonists of the 80s did — British Columbia, she or it, is described as a ' Pacific lass with poker wisdom on her face.' She is betrothed to the rest of Canada with promises of the railroad and as the years drag by:

The Lady's face was flushed. Thirteen years now

> Since that engagement ring adorned her finger!
> Adorned? Betrayed. She often took it off
> And flung it angrily upon the dresser,
> Then took excursions with her sailor-lover.

This vitalises the dead dust of history indeed and perhaps it is a bit too simple and jolly. Yet it certainly is an attempt at solving one of the difficulties that lie in the grain of Pratt's subject. So far as the railroad of the 70s and 80s is concerned the dragon is easy to see, those mountains, that North Shore. Since neither Queen Victoria nor Sir John A. Macdonald were strong enough personally to build the whole railroad themselves, there is no one single hero to be found in the material and in Pratt's poem the hero or dragon-slayer becomes about half-a-dozen figures of the time. Well, that is a difficulty really overcome because I think the inter-actions among the half-dozen rugged Canadians concerned are about as interesting as the entire character of a single epic hero. Stories or rather epics like this demand some sort of reason for the dragon-slaying, an Andromeda, a Helen or a Penelope; British Columbia has to do, I am afraid, and perhaps in the terms of 1871 — mesozoic rocks, syndicates, gold, funds, muskegs, and parliamentary speeches — she should be seen as the rather comical grotesque haggish spinsterish figure of this poem.

Sir John A. Macdonald is also shown doing things that ring true poetically, but do not appear with much prominence in the histories. In Pratt's poem he is shown in a fit of insomnia:

> Seizing a telescope, he swept the skies,
> The north-south drift, a self illumined chart.
> The stellar path looked too much like a road map
> Upon his wall — the roads all led to market —
> The north-south route.

This is Pratt's way of presenting the familiar theory that Canada naturally forms itself into a series of regions economically and physically attached to similar regions in the United States, that Canada has no reason for being. But Pratt goes on to tell how Macdonald:

> lit a candle, held
> It to a second map full of blank spaces
> The arrows pointing west.

Although geographical accident and Nature if heeded would argue that Canada should be just an economic extension of the U.S.A., intelligence and imagination light a candle that reveals what can be carved for an ideal out of the toughest natural situation.

I wonder if Sir John A. ever really seized a telescope; in this poem, however, the viewpoint is that he should have and he should have had the very picturesque and keen sense of the problem that he does in the poem because that is the way the heroes of heroic poems are supposed to act, in a somewhat larger-than-life fashion. The poet, as I have pointed out, has the one central vision of the hero and the dragon; because he sees reality from the inside out he must often readjust quite violently what actually happened to what his imagination tells him should have happened — the basic reality underlying all human experience.

So the western subject of building the first Canadian Transcontinental experiences quite a few changes in Pratt's poem, necessary changes as you can see if it is to enter the Canadian people's imagination. All too much of our tradition lies only in the history book, the economics text book and the museum; Dr Pratt has been one of our poets who has most successfully performed the difficult job of bringing the materials of our tradition into the world of imagination where these materials can perform the useful work of defining and moulding us imaginatively as a nation. This definition and moulding should help our national self-possession and poise a great deal. Professor Northrup Frye, in commenting on the last passage we have been examining — the one about the opposition of the two viewpoints about Canada, the East-West and the North-South theory — in commenting he says, summing up the point I have been trying to make about the whole poem, ' I don't know how true this is historically, but there is far too much accurate Canadian history now, and far too little accurate Canadian vision.'

Towards the Last Spike shows what a poet has to do and can do with Canada's traditions; a discussion of it leads to a smaller discussion of what, after reading Pratt, one should learn to expect from other artists who deal with the Canadian scene. When you first look at Canadian history the explorers of the country stand out very prominently. As the men and boats go up the rivers, portage to other rivers until finally there is nothing left to explore it is as if you are watching something vegetable being riddled by cut worms. Usually this part of Canada's past is greeted with jubilation. It is generally regarded as being a sort of Bacchanalian conquest of India with our representatives spreading a superior civilisation right and left. Well, if that's true you wish someone would do something poetically with the jubilation; for instance, the Portuguese poet, Camoens, seems to be able to turn Portuguese exploratory ventures into an epic and he also seems to be able to introduce gods and goddesses quite easily into the Portuguese scene. I think

early Canadian history needs a few gods and goddesses at the crucial points.

When a poet or novelist turns from Canada's events to Canada's leaders, I think that *Towards the Last Spike* encourages him to be more daring than a historian can be. To a historian it is probably only the worst sort of fancy that the rebels with Mackenzie in the years just before 1837 did their plotting and held their meetings under a huge beer vat on King Street, I believe; whereas the Family Compact kept their conservatism firm with something or under something a bit more genteel and less bucolic than a beer vat. This must sound a rather grotesque interpretation but to see our tradition comically, grotesquely, tragically, but to see it so others can, is the artist's task.

The prime ministers of our country look at first glance, except for Macdonald, difficult material for any novelist or poet. And yet they are, after all, our leaders as much so as the leaders in the epics. I think that Pratt's handling of some of the parliamentary figures in his poem encourages one to hunt for poetry in even the most unlikely figures. When, for example, Alexander Mackenzie's biographer states just as a matter of fact that, when taking his wedding vows, Mackenzie refused to say, 'With this body I thee honour,' the novelist and poet see significances that the historian does not have to touch. The novelist sees an eccentric rather electrifying honesty that is rather rare; the poet sees it as a striking example of the force behind the fact that there has been very little love poetry written in this country. One goddess at least must be angry at Canada although it is only public observance of her wishes that is lacking. In no way would I quarrel with the historian — and the biographer's objective interpretation. There has to be some sort of stonewall and anchor from which the artist can begin. But it is surely part of our national development to make our tradition more of ourselves than an objective treatment of it allows. Pratt's poetry certainly shows the way here.

Again and again in *Towards the Last Spike* one sees the idea of words battling with stubborn chaos, a chaos in both Nature and Man; one sees this idea also suggesting how Pratt's whole poem conquers for its readers a portion of Canada's story that was just a portion, take it or leave it; until he wrote *Towards the Last Spike*. The North Shore of Lake Superior — the reptile — finds the fact that the railroad builders speak the factor that finally divides them from her. Van Horne — the organising genius behind the actual building of the railroad — is said to be fighting 'against two fortresses: the mind, the rock.' There are the people who don't believe in the

railroad, their minds; and the rock which doesn't believe in railroads over itself either. But Van Horne — one of whose roles was that of an inspired telegrapher — and one of whose hobbies was the careful collecting and labelling of fossils — at length does force both rocks and minds to accept his legend, for he is said to be one who loves 'to work on shadows,' that there is nothing that can resist the power of his human imagination. The whole poem treating as its subject a rather intractable period of our history, bristling with parliamentary speeches also in the way it can force the most ill-assorted collection of objects to assume a magnetised pattern that has meaning shows the power of the human imagination. Near the end of the poem, as the workers finish the last tunnels through the mountains and emerge into daylight again after dark excavation; as a reader I felt that a country like Canada might also, from this poem, feel the first rays of an imaginative daylight and also perhaps learn from *Towards the Last Spike* how to advance even farther into that daylight.

THE CONTEMPORARY FRENCH NOVEL

By HENRI PEYRE (*Sterling Professor of French and Head of the Department of French, Yale University*) $5.50

In this comprehensive critical study Henri Peyre defines the trends of the contemporary French novel from André Gide and Marcel Proust to the present. He offers a critical interpretation of the best and most characteristic works of those novelists who seem destined to survive. Among the individual novelists he considers, in addition to Gide and Proust, are: Duhamel, Romains, Martin Du Gard, Radiguet, Mauriac, Giono, Saint-Exupéry, Malraux, Sartre, Camus, and De Beauvoir. He also indicates new trends in the novel perceptible in emerging young writers, and in a section of the Appendix gives brief, critical evaluations of their work.

Oxford University Press

THIS, THEN, IS UNMARKED TIME

On street corners, Sunday afternoons, en route
Somewhere, where streets cross, or waiting for a bus,
One may encounter a certain silence stalled there,
That those born without mouths mark time by
To themselves; as appropriate and ubiquitous as air,
Occupying what would otherwise be cluttered or wasted space.

A royal silence, curtseyed in the whoosh of revolving doors,
Makes its stay on the pavement to hold court,
While the sunshine, to keep it gay,
Stands on the marble steps and smiles.
All the trees down the block nod, and the traffic —
Respectful and discrete — passes the news of the day.

The morning paper discarded and crumpled
Nevertheless responds to the charm, and nestles
Comfortably against the curbstone, near the mailbox.
You too are comfortable; you belong where you are —
Perhaps to yourself? — in that benign spell,
Till looking farther on the street you suddenly see

Fugitive light racing along the trolley tracks,
The afternoon drugged and hazy and late, and up the cross street
Two parallel tarry ridges where once trolley tracks,
And light in flight on the hoods of cars,
And clouding on the windowpanes, and seagulls raucous overhead,
And a blind man tapping tapping by with his canes.

This, then, is unmarked time, when those born having mouths
Speak only to themselves, and to themselves are strange;
When averted faces over clutched bundles hurry on their ways;
Oneself, and silence too, dismissed for the day;
When every signpost is a blank look for the sky, or a broken song,
Or a cry. Unbend your knee, clutch your coat, and be gone.

Don Silberger

THE BEACHCOMBER

White-bearded, feeble-handed,
The old man mumbles on the beach,
Waves his clumsy drift-wood sword
At the white-capped enemy horde,
And with his ancient hand
Traces his fortress in the sand.

A thousand heroes ride
The unanchored tide
Against his fortress in the sand,
And fall and break
And bleed white foam
Beneath his trembling hand.

Once more
He holds the field
And gathers in the spoils —
Two pebbles,
A hollow shell,
And a sea-bird murdered on the rocks.

Robert DeMaria

Proposal of the Republic

Dean Cadle

With his arms resting on the base of the window, Bowling was watching the detail of two prisoners in the yard below. On the wall above them a guard paced lazily against the sea that reached unruffled in the afternoon brilliance to the city, crowned by an unmoving cloud moored like a snow dirigible.

'Senor Bowling.' A guard stood beyond the cell door with a letter.

Jose Tavera, without shifting his body, reached out of his hammock and took the letter and handed it to Bowling. He turned back to the window before opening it. Inside was a magazine clipping, similar to a half dozen others the warden had sent him during the first days of his imprisonment. 'Warning to historical novelists. Everett Bowling, former movie script writer and author of *A State is Born,* was sentenced three months ago by the Republic of Batanga on a charge of what it terms a "treacherous and revolutionary interpretation" of its government. Fifteen months ago Bowling took out four-year trial citizenship papers, thus becoming subject to the laws of the Republic. He will remain in prison until his citizenship period terminates. Meanwhile, in this country his book has climbed to the best-seller lists, and his ex-wife, actress Margaret Farrell, says, "I didn't think he had it in him."' There was a picture of his ex-wife in a bikini bathing suit.

'Letter from the senorita, maybe?' Tavera asked.

'No. Another love note from the warden.'

'A-haa,' he said swinging out of his hammock. 'I told you the warden would not forget you. He never forgets bachelors.' He reached for the clipping.

'The Republic, eh?' he exclaimed after reading the clipping aloud, as he read everything, even letters from his wife. He stood in the center of the floor with his hands lifted, the palms upward in the manner of a maestro. 'Bah on the Republic! Look at you. Look at me. Me, the mayor of Kolimbolinga.'

Bowling turned back to the workers in the yard. Already they had placed against the wall an arbor of loosely-woven palm fronds from which sprouted a profusion of white lilies and hibiscus blossoms laced with spray

ferns. The workers now brought out an organ and a stool and placed them to one side of the arbor, and when they had retired, an old man walked with dignity to the organ and began playing a native version of 'Because.'

'Already?' Tavera said. 'I did not know it was so late.'

A young minister crossed the yard and was followed by the warden and three couples, pacing slowly. The minister stopped with his back to the arbor, and the couples formed a semi-circle in front of him.

'It is strange to me. This is three chances you have passed. I do not understand it at all.'

Tavera had not ceased to amuse him, and when Bowling was in the mood he argued and joked with him, for his short body and the enormous glasses on his pock-marked face gave him a bit of the fairy grotesquerie that seemed to touch the entire Republic. The city, for instance, enfolded in the first shadows of twilight, resembled a miniature movie city when he viewed it from this distance in the evenings. Behind the city rose a palm-covered hill with an ancient lookout tower that was a relic of the days of Spanish domination; later in the evenings, when the fog had blotted out the city, the tower remained barely visible, jutting out of the mist as though suspended there unattached to the earth, reminding Bowling of a painting of a medieval torture tower he had once seen in a Los Angeles gallery. Even the prison structure on the volcanic rock, when he first saw it through the rain-laden morning with the gulls winging toward its shelter, had reminded him of the giant ark he saw several years previously on the movie set of 'The Flood.' And the warden, certainly, was something from the movies.

The guard on the wall paused when he came even with the group below and stood observing with his weight on one foot while the minister quoted the words of the ceremony.

'To have a wife is such a needful thing in the life of a man. And it is so easy to get one.'

'Love without love is not love, Jose.'

'Love!' he exploded. 'You Americans speak always of love, then you divorce as much as you marry. You marry when you don't need to marry, and so you have to get a divorce. Now you need to marry, but no, you tell the warden, not this time, warden. Ever-rett, you should write the senorita and tell her, yes. The warden does not believe in bachelors.'

'We have a saying in the States that I'm using on the warden: Just cross your legs and say, no. Do you know any of these fellows?'

'I know only one,' Tavera said, wedging his face into the window

beside Bowling's shoulder. 'The big one with the flat nose. He is Manuel Retana, a very bad man. He was guerilla leader during the war, then he became a gangster under the Republic. He is very bad. The girl, her name I do not know, but she was his — in the moving pictures, you know, the woman who makes herself boss of the gang when the leader gets in prison, and she is waiting outside the prison in a fast car when he escapes.'

Faintly came the drone that marked the hour, and then framed in the window was the evening plane, streaming and exploding in the slanting sun, lifting powerfully and lightly like some prehistoric bird fleeing the city.

'Aaah! It is about time for the launch then,' Tavera said, peering into the fragments of mist that hovered like gray head-veils of invisible women strolling the water. He went to the washstand in the corner and removed a clay bottle and sprinkled its fragrant contents on his head and on other parts of his body; a perfume of roots and crushed blossoms with which his wife kept him supplied. 'It has been a long week, Ever-rett, but tonight I sleep like a man is made to sleep.'

'Gomez, your wife,' a guard's voice came down the sultry cell block, and with it the opening click of a lock. 'Hamada, . . .' 'Golderon, . . .' 'Tavera, your wife.'

'I shall return after an hour,' Tavera said, lifting his hand to Bowling as the guard locked the door behind him.

Bowling wiped the perspiration from his face and climbed into his hammock and lay waiting for Tavera's return with all the news his wife would bring. What movies she had seen, what prominent foreigners were visiting the islands, chatter about happenings at the textile factory, and imitations of the escapades of his two children, one born while he was mayor of Kolimbolinga and the other one a year after his imprisonment.

'Senor Bowling?' a guard said. 'The warden wishes to see you.'

It had been a month since the warden's last insistence that he get married, so perhaps this time the warden had news that he was to be paroled. Bowling had heard nothing so far, but surely the State Department was doing something. Loss of hope had not yet come to him, but Tavera said it would come all right, since one soon grew accustomed to being called at unexpected hours for interviews pertaining to the improvement of the prison and the welfare of its inmates.

Bowling stepped into the warden's office and the door was closed behind him. Because the room was much dimmer than the reflected light of the stairways, he stood for a moment before going to the warden's desk.

The desk was near a large doorway opening onto a lighted patio, and above the desk was the only light in the room, a large bulb shaded so that all its light was confined to the desk top.

'Good evening, Senor Bowling,' Warden Javellana's voice came from the darkness behind the desk, and Bowling went to the desk and sat down.

He noticed that the usual guards were absent. The one who had brought him had not entered. He looked onto the patio; usually patrolled by two guards, it was now empty. Beyond the patio the night and the sea had become one, but on the horizon glowed a red light, rainbow shaped, like fire on the water, and held at bay the darkness.

Warden Javellana leaned forward and brought his brown face into sharp relief, the light touching the square chin with a suggestion of antagonism but softening the dark eyes. His thick hair was cut short and, like his guards and like the police and the soldiers of the Republic, he wore khaki clothes with the shoulder patch of a crossed bolo and liberty torch.

'I hardly know how to begin what I wish to talk about, Senor Bowling,' the warden said as he finished filling his pipe from a clay humidor. He lit the pipe and continued, 'I suppose the best way is to ask if you have given my suggestion any further thought.'

'Yes, Sir, I have. My feeling is still the same.'

As though that were the answer he expected, and was waiting for, the warden said, 'As you may know, I spent three years in your country studying prisons and their inmates. I learned much about how men in confinement should be treated. A free translation of one of our proverbs is that, just as a man's virtue may be a defect of his personality so his vice may be a defect of his society. Yourself, for example. You have written a book in which there is much original political philosophy, and if we can accept the opinions of a few American book reviewers then Plato as a political theorist becomes just another Greek. Yet, here you are in prison.

'A man is born with certain natural passions, Senor Bowling. We did not give them to him. We exercised no control over them before he came here. And to attempt to curb them completely while he is here would be one of the most harmful errors we could commit. We want him to live a balanced life. Whether a man is single or married, our aim is to prevent complications that may destroy his family life or further pervert his personality. Because many of our inmates have families when they are sentenced, it is the desire of the Republic to keep those families intact. We feel we have chosen the only humane solution. It is only logical then to give single

men the same priviliges, so we encourage them to marry, and if necessary help them find wives. If you keep a stream dammed up long enough, Senor Bowling, something has got to give, as the Americans say.'

Bowling half expected a smile from the warden after that. But the warden's face was placid; sincerity burned in the small, dark eyes.

'I'm doing all right, Sir. And I don't think I'll develop complications.' He deliberately chose the warden's word.

'That is a chance I don't like to take.'

He struck a match to his pipe, lowering his eyes toward the flame until they almost disappeared in their dark pouches. Around the stem of the pipe he said, 'Tell me, why is it you do not wish to take a wife?'

'Because under the circumstances there is no one I care enough about,' Bowling answered, confident he was bringing the interview to a conclusion. Or, as it occurred to him, confident that again he was thwarting the warden, because he had come to think of this opposition between the warden and himself as something of a game.

But the warden, as though the excuse were totally unrelated to the conversation, began thumbing through a folder and said, 'There are many charming women in the Republic, several of whom I believe you know. These letters that have come to you, for instance. As you know, we keep a file of every such letter that comes to an inmate. Some of the correspondents say they want to marry you because you are an American, some because you are a writer, and one because she thinks the men of Batanga make bad husbands.'

Bowling remembered one woman who wanted to know if he would be so kind, since he had plenty of time, as to criticize her poetry, but the warden did not mention that one.

'Most of them sent pictures and a history of their life. But you've read them all. If you remember, most of them are highly eligible women. Here, for instance, is a letter from the opera singer Crescentia Orosa, who seems to know you well.'

'Yes, I met her in Kolimbolinga when I first came to the islands. She is an attractive woman, and a fine singer.'

'She seems quite infatuated with you.'

'Perhaps she is tired of singing.'

Bowling thought that certainly the warden would smile at that.

'Excuse me, Senor Bowling, but why is it you and Senorita Galura are not writing?'

Bowling felt his body shift involuntarily. He glanced at the warden,

but the warden was studying another flame that was winking at the mouth of his pipe bowl.

'How do you know about her?'

'Forgive me, Senor Bowling. But it is my duty.' He had his pipe burning well now, and he continued to talk around the stem. 'When a man is sentenced here, especially an unmarried man, we send out men to learn all we can about his personal relations. When our men got to Senor Galura's plantation they found the senorita unwilling to assist them. You may not approve of our methods, for our men got one of the plantation servants intoxicated and he talked for an hour.'

Bowling sat forward in his chair, his anger showing on his face.

'They probably wrote out the answers they wanted and paid the servant to say yes to them.'

'Not quite. But the whiskey caused him to lose a day's work, and so he was paid the standard wage the government pays its casual employees.'

'But you know you can't believe a drunk man.'

'No. So our men went back the next day. The servant verified every statement he had made and was kind enough to volunteer additional facts.'

The warden had been glancing at some typed sheets as he talked, and now he began reading excerpts of the servant's statement. Bowling felt he could identify the particular servant, so careful it seemed the agents had been to copy his exact words, even the alcoholic intonations: they pranced, then wavered, then revived, piecing together there on the desk top a puppet play of his year with Fay Galura. A puppet play of favorite scenes that now at night thronged his mind in orderly sequence, unfurled there by his memory like projections on a screen: Fay on horseback beside him with her hair pulled back and held in a net as they rode between long rows of palms; the afternoons on the screened porch of his nipa hut when he watched her, the shape of her legs against her skirt, as she climbed the path; and the morning the soldiers took him to say good-by, Fay clinging to his arm all the way to the carriage, her face a mask of distortion.

'Tell me, Warden, why do you do so much prying into a man's private affairs?'

'Please do not be angry, Senor Bowling. It is to prevent complications that we need such facts.'

'So you *do* think I have complications?'

'I do not know, Senor. But I have reasons to think they may be approaching you.'

'What kind of reasons?'

'I have called Senor Tavera down for two interviews. Neither time did he have anything to say —'

'Which is surprising.'

'Then two days ago he asked to see me. He thinks you have dreams at night, for he says that often he hears you speaking the senorita's name in your sleep.'

'Tavera lies.'

'Yes, we know he is a liar. That is one of the reasons he is here. But the guard on your block has also reported that he often hears you calling the senorita's name.'

'I'm doing fine here, Warden, despite certain inconveniences.'

'Fortunately you are only the second inmate we have had with such strong convictions. Last year we admitted a wealthy merchant who had managed to withhold certain taxes from the Republic. When he learned that he was to be imprisoned he managed to have a false marriage registered between himself and his secretary. Five months passed before we uncovered his deceit.'

'What happened then?'

'Eventually we persuaded him to marry her.'

'You mean you actually made him marry her?'

'You make it sound much worse than it was. I'm certain we were justified. And that brings me to another question. Did you plan to marry Senorita Galura?'

'Didn't your agents find that out for you?'

'Yes, but I wanted to hear it from you.'

'Look, Warden, whether I intended to marry her or not isn't going to prove a thing for either of us. I have just finished one marriage that I wanted to last. I don't want the same thing to happen again. Any plans Fay Galura and I may have had are off until I get out of here. That's the way we want it.'

'Is that the way she wants it?'

'That's the way we both want it.'

The warden paused to light his pipe, and when he removed it from his mouth Bowling thought that for the first time that evening he saw a faint smile on his lips. Or perhaps simply the removal of the pipe left his lips slightly awry.

'Excuse me for keeping you so long, Senor Bowling,' he said, rising,

' but it is something I am much interested in.'

He pressed a button, and a guard opened the rear door.

' Please feel free to see me at any time,' the warden said as Bowling was leaving.

Back in the cell Bowling found Tavera sleeping quietly with an arm folded under his head.

Bowling removed his own clothes and climbed into his hammock. He had been correct in his judgment of Tavera: he was a squealer. But he held him no ill feeling. Nor the warden either. Although he had been angered during the interview, he was amused now and relieved. For the warden had played his ace and still their game was at a stalemate.

The prison was asleep. The light in the cellway had been dimmed. The launch had departed, returning the wives to the city, and the men had returned to their cells and without talk gone to bed. Even the men in the block above and in the one below who would not see their wives until tomorrow evening or later in the week had quieted. Only the sea made noises, the waves gossiping as they passed like merrymakers eager for the city.

While Bowling was still trying to go to sleep the cell door rattled.

' Senor Bowling? Come with us, please.'

He left the cell, a guard walking in front of him and a second one behind.

' The warden again?'

' No, Senor.'

' Who, then?'

' You are being transferred to another cell, Senor Bowling.'

' Why is that?'

The guards did not answer. They took him down to the first block and past the warden's office. Bowling stopped.

' Take me to see the warden. You fellows have made a mistake.'

' The warden is in his quarters, Senor Bowling. You will be unable to see him until tomorrow morning.'

Bowling persisted. The guards were joined by a third who stepped from a doorway, and Bowling felt the point of a bayonet pricking his back.

He was taken along the block and down another flight of stairs. Then with two guards behind him and one in front, they began descending a circular stairway that reached downward like a flung coil the full length of a shaft-like passageway. Bowling noticed that the stone walls of the prison

had disappeared and were replaced by solid volcanic rock.

'Why the hell can't you fellows tell me what this is for?' Bowling demanded, his voice echoing, beginning loudly and then diminishing to a whisper as it tailed away, fleeing upward.

'I am sorry, Senor Bowling.'

At the foot of the stairway, after the guards flicked on flashlights, Bowling realized they were taking him along some kind of natural corridor. At its end was a door of steel bars that latticed a dark mouth, and when the door swung back there were loud creaks that whirled in a series of hollow echoes down the tunnel to die in its length and darkness.

Bowling felt the point of the bayonet again, urging him through the doorway. He swore at the guards in dialect as they closed the door, calling them an unclean name. 'We are sorry, Senor.' With the flashlight spotted to one side of the doorway, they stood for a moment looking at him; then they left him and went down the corridor single file. Bowling held onto the door for several minutes, listening. Then with one hand sliding along the slippery wall, he guided himself forward, dragging his feet across the floor of sand and fanning his other arm, grasping the darkness, like someone playing a game of blindman's buff.

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Five Poems

PERFORMANCE

Who in this world is uppermost — the singer
Silently waiting in the frame of the stage while the fingers
Of the pianist fly, fly, building the atmosphere,
Like a wind changing weather, in which we too shall appear?

Who alone enough to be most? The note of her entrance
Is caught by the singer now. And the long elegance
Of the lyricist writing of his love is warm, warm and alive
In her voice, and has no more beautiful way to survive.

The singer, so closely accompanied, gives to the melody,
Broken out like flame from the lyric, breath, breath, flesh, O warm body —
Hands of the pianist reviving the enchantment of the composer
In a flashing cascade from the score. But further out, further

From the fluid support now the physical notes of the singer,
Hands clasped to hold to her heart, and we — we the bringer
Of assistance — we in one body, braced. O without us
Would she be far out where the breath of the notes hangs nebulous —

Flung almost too far? Not too far. The tremulous throat
Sends, sends the warmth of the heart where the ultimate notes
Hang high over the song. They are promised, they are written,
They have to be known. They are stars. O in splendor they heighten

All life underneath. We are there — lifted, lifting — where she soars
Into silence. The stars hang silent. The pianist pours
The composer's finality into sound — the singer still tall
In the song, hands clasped to her place, while carefully the notes fall.

VIOLENCE

The thunder tumbles down the flight of heaven,
Crashes and breaks and stumbles up for more,
The wind keeps rising till the rain is driven
Through all the branches to the summer's core.

I answer with a roof and say with walls
That we are best apart — but oh the wind
Keeps coming, coming with its brutish falls
Among the branches, rising more determined.

And oh the eye of lightning keeps on looking
Flash, flash, flash, flash — a signal sent to prove
That windows open every way of locking
The doors against what needn't even shove.

Flash, flash. My vigil, ravished, pierces the uproar
Through watery pane to feel the trees that yield
Ripped of a flight of leaves, a branch, the scour
Of rainfall plastering petals, till this shield

Flows out into the guttery rush. . . . Exhausted
Wind falls on fields in body of the rain,
Sighs low, sighs low with longing in the wasted
Vast voice, and whispers all the summer sane.

AT NIGHT

Spirit of me all naked of my doings
Wanders here, knows this meadow,
Takes the wind,
By the moon has this shadow
And stands still
Still, still above it laid upon the snow
Till from my farthest thought
The stars are fruit.

FIRST GRANDCHILD

He's had my hands — now what to do with hands
That've left him, have the hollow of his shape,
Have fingers of his need, have, O, the weight
Of having lifted him, newborn, at night
And held him to my heartbeat. This compulsion
To be his tree, to be the seasoned rooting

That lets him grow without a gap between
The womb and outer lingers in these fingers —
And in him are these fingers bone in bone?

Time was made friend to serve him, pushed fear further
Away with each accomplished night and morning,
No longer harried me; we worked together
The great strides of his days from quick surrender.

Now fingers hinge him to my life, as fingers
Made scaffolding for him, in deep night holding
His growing, growing, growing — these joints have ached with growing;
How else can hands have such a great unfolding?

THE GORGE

By summer led, we leave the golden heat,
The hot and shining surface of the land,
And climb down in, down rocks until we meet
Roots that find air as dank and still as sand.

Only their tips in leaning banks, the roots
Vein the brown air above the earthy spring
Bubbling brown, cold to circulate over rocks
That skeleton the soil. A covering

Of leaves is over air removed from sky,
The sunken air is watery to our breath,
The brown roots spreading, twisting round us tie
Us tight into our intimacy with earth.

O inner earth moulded of life and death
Where intermingled all thrust forth again
Into the blazing light, a flowery wreath
On all beneath, we bear your fragrant stain.

Dorothy Roberts

The Moth

John A. Lynch

'Why don't you go for a nice walk?' Mrs Foster suggested. 'There are lots of nice places you can walk here. It's lovely to be outside.'

Greta stirred, sitting alone on the love seat, her feet scraping back and forth on the carpet. 'I don't know much about the country,' she said, shuffling her feet.

'But there are ever so many things to see, dear,' said Mrs Foster. 'If you'd only go outside, you'd find ever so many things.'

She looked at her mother. She hadn't wanted to come to Mrs Foster's in the first place, but her mother had promised that she could drive part of the way, once they had got on the country roads, and she had let herself be persuaded by that. She had driven for fifteen miles.

But once she had got to Mrs Foster's there had been nothing for her to do. Uncomfortably, she had sat watching the two older women talk of their friends in the city, of living in the country, and of a club or two whose names were only a little bit familiar to Greta.

The Fosters lived in an old farmhouse, which they had done over, still painted white on the outside, but inside completely redecorated. There was a lake not far away, but it was still too early to swim.

Greta shuffled her feet, then rose and stood a moment. Her mother had given her no reassurance. 'Perhaps I will go outside,' she said, and walked slowly to the door, without looking back.

She walked along the driveway and down to the road, a narrow blacktop road that came out of a low place where the lake touched it, swung along the hill where the Fosters lived, then down again through fields that were green in wheat. Greta could see the greenness in great swatches and far off in the direction the road took the swatches lying crookedly on the hillsides, like a patch-work. There would be nothing that way, though, she thought, she could see all that there was. And yet she felt a certain pleasure now just in seeing it, the land stretching away, green and brown and green again, rolling on the hills, and here and there the houses and the barns of white, and also the barns of red. It made a picture. She did not know that she had ever seen anything like it before.

But she did not go that way. She walked instead in the direction of the lake. There was one house between the Fosters' and the lake, a run-down farmhouse, its front porch sagging in the middle as if it were about to collapse. There were no curtains in the windows and the only flowers that bloomed in the yard were two purple lilac bushes near the porch. For a moment as she passed the house, it made her sad, that it should be run-down. Then she was beyond it and around a bend in the road she saw the lake.

She left the road and walked through a shallow ditch into the tall dead winter grass that grew beyond the road. The ground was springy beneath her feet and hummocks of early green rose out of the dead brown grass of winter. As she passed, she reached absently to a tree and the leaf she picked was all downy on one side, that side white and the other a glistening green. The leaf was scalloped all around its edges. She picked another leaf, from another tree, and this one was notched deeply in two places, two rounded notches, so that the leaf had as it were three fingers, and when she looked closely at the leaf she smelt a sweet aroma coming up from it. It was unlike anything she had ever smelled before and she wondered what it was.

There was no breeze and the lake lay still. A trail led through the grass and Greta walked along this to the edge of the lake. The bank was matted with grass and here and there pieces of driftwood had been thrown up, sticks and twigs and curiously shaped dry brown leaves. She knelt and touched the leaves and some of them had a rubbery texture, as if perhaps they had come up from under the water.

A turtle that had been sunning itself slipped from its piece of wood and disappeared soundlessly into the lake. She saw it move, not when it began, but the sideways movement, out of the corner of her eye, and before she could bring her head round it was gone. She watched to see that it might come up again and after a minute it appeared, a small, dark head, breaking the water several feet beyond the piece of wood. The head remained perfectly still, then slipped backwards into the water again, with only the faintest ripple on the surface.

It was fascinating that the turtle could do that, Greta thought. She sat down on the bank, pulled her legs under her, and watched the spot where the turtle's head had disappeared. Then she saw another, a little farther out. It was larger but she had not seen it appear. It was just suddenly there and not a mark on the water to show how long it had been watching her. Then it too slipped beneath the surface and she was alone.

Her hand lay on the grass and she felt that it was rough to her touch. But there was smooth grass too, and looking around from where she sat she could see three, four, five kinds of grass. There was a tall grass that seemed to have barbs all along one edge and it hurt a little to draw her finger against it. There was soft grass, like they had at home, lawn grass, but growing here so far from any lawn, by the lake. Another grass was thin and nearly round, like a tube. And there were other things, too. She stretched on her stomach on the bank, her face close to the ground, her fingers moving forward through the grasses, feeling for things. There was one grass that came apart in sections and looked like a green stick. Each of the sections was ringed with black at its top, ridged up and down on the sides, and when you pulled the sections apart they popped. She popped a dozen of them, lying there, and they were coarse and hard in her fingers, not like grass at all, but she supposed they were. There were so many things.

There was a fern that grew alone farther down the bank and without getting to her feet Greta crawled along the ground to where it grew. It was only six or seven inches high and five fronds, like shepherds' crooks, came up from the root. They were covered with down, like the leaf had been, and stretched out in the grass she touched the opening fronds and with her fingers followed the fronds down into the earth and found there, around the plant, the dead brown fronds of last year. They had not withered away yet and when she pulled on them they came loose only with an effort, breaking off.

Then, not three feet ahead, looking as if it had grown there, fastened to a bush, she saw the gray cocoon of a moth. She saw it all in detail, an oval, dully shining thing, tied with silk to a small branch, and though she had never seen one before she knew immediately what it must be. She hunched forward, pulling her legs beneath her, then sitting, cross-legged, she reached her hand out cautiously and touched the cocoon. It was hard, as hard as the branch to which it was bound. The silk was rough and on one side of the cocoon a leaf, brown and torn now, had been woven into the threads. She tried to pull the cocoon free of the branch but it would not come.

She had moved perhaps twenty feet from where she had first sat down, where she had watched for the turtles, and a row of bushes now obstructed her view of the water. She could see the lake beyond the bushes, but not clearly, so that she could not tell whether the turtles were up again or not.

On her hands and knees she crawled back to where she had first been and stretched full length on the bank and watched again for the turtles. She felt strange within herself, strange in a way she could not remember ever having felt before, and she wondered about the thing she had just seen. There was life inside it. There was life wrapped up in a cocoon of silk and the life was changing. That is what cocoons are for. She knew that. Inside, where no one can see, life changes.

Her heart beat loudly and she could feel it not only in her chest but in her arms, along her thighs and strongly in the pit of her stomach. Her fingers throbbed where they stretched out in the grass, and she felt her toes, stretched out, as if they were far away behind her, throbbing too. She felt like she might be sick, but she did not get sick. It was a strange feeling and yet a good one. Something was happening to her and she did not know exactly what it was.

She crawled back to the cocoon and slowly, carefully broke it from its hold on the branch, tearing the threads of silk. Quickly she held it to her ear, as if she might hear something, as if she might hear it living now, hear it growing. Then she felt the little hollow place where the branch and been and she ran her finger along the hollow place and as she did she noticed a slight, almost imperceptible shifting of the weight inside the cocoon.

She lay perfectly still and did not know what to do. She gripped the cocoon in her hand, then opened her hand and watched it. The cocoon did not move. Perhaps, she thought, she had not felt it at all, she may have just imagined it.

Then the cocoon twitched again. As if whatever was inside had suddenly convulsed, the cocoon rolled to its side, rolled back, rolled again. Greta clasped it in her hand. She held it tight, next to her body, and through her fingers she felt the unborn moth moving back and forth.

Her mother's voice came to her first, calling her name from up the road. Then Mrs Foster's, louder and highly pitched. The voices came down through the trees and to the shore of the lake where Greta lay, but she did not answer. She lay holding the cocoon and only when it stopped moving, when she was sure it would not move again, did she get up. Her dress was wet where she had knelt into the earth and wet at her stomach which had been pressed tight against the ground. She smoothed it now, brushing out the wrinkles, removing the grass that clung to her. Then she put the cocoon deep into the pocket of her dress and went out to the road.

'We thought you had got lost,' her mother said.

' I did,' she said, ' I did,' but would not look at them.

There was no way to explain it to anyone, Greta knew. It was three weeks now and she had not yet told her mother, for her mother would laugh, she knew, at least she would not understand. Each day Greta had kept the cocoon in a box in the closet of her bedroom, hidden down among a lot of other boxes, sweater boxes and shoe boxes, and each night she had brought it out of the box and placed it on the table beside her bed. And only once had she seen it move. The fourth night she had had it home, on the bedside table, the cocoon had rolled to its side several times, then stopped, and she had not seen it move again.

She switched off the light, dug her feet down under the covers and thought again of the day by the lake, and the sense of change in things that she had felt that day as she lay on the bank. She thought of the fern and the grasses and the leaves, and she remembered how she had looked with her dress wet and how she had walked out to the road with the cocoon safely in her pocket. She moved her feet far down into the bed and wondered how much longer she would have to wait.

Greta thought perhaps that she had not been asleep at all that night, for she did not remember falling asleep. Her legs were tangled in the sheets as if she had been restless, but it was not this that had awakened her. She pulled herself up slowly, on one elbow. She sensed it as much as heard it, a slight scratching on the table top beside the bed. It was the moth, it could be nothing else.

She hesitated in the darkness, not sure, then reached for the light and turned it on, but the moment her eyes had focused she knew that something was wrong. She blinked her eyes, then rubbed them, for instead of the moth, there on the table was an ugly, brown wormish thing, slowly crawling toward her. It had pulled itself halfway across the table, a fat, swollen, almost shapeless body, with stub-wings, a shiny head and two enormous feelers reaching out in front. It scratched on the table, hardly able to walk, its fat body dragging on the surface.

She did not know what it was and in a way it horrified her. It plainly looked as if it were suffering, dragging itself, that, in fact, it needed her to help it, crawling toward her, yet she could not bring herself to touch it. Its whole body was damp and wet hair was matted on its swollen abdomen.

Greta thought she had never seen anything so displeasing before. And suddenly she felt embarrassed, too, watching it, as if this were an obscene thing.

The empty cocoon rested on the table and one end of it lay open, the silken threads curled back and the open end damp as if a fluid had been poured through it. There was a spot on the table, too, where the fluid had spilled out, and there was a line traced across the table as far as the moth had come.

She wished she knew more about what was happening, for now she could see that it was a moth, for the wings had begun to grow. It had begun in a moment. Where there had been stubs one moment there were now wings growing out along the moth's back. The entire appearance of the moth was changing.

The fine brown ribs of the wings were coming in, slowly, yet more quickly now, stretching back, and between the ribs the wings brown and pink and here a little blue. The wings wrinkled out of the moth's body, silently, and the body began to lose its ungainly shape. As if the body were pumping out the substance of the wings, the body became smaller as the wings grew larger. The moth stopped on the table and Greta watched it. For a minute or so she watched it, then she held her finger out before the moth. Her fear and embarrassment were passing now, for she had begun to understand that this was something that was not bad, not unclean. And she thought, too, that perhaps all moths may be born at night, even as this one, so that we cannot see what they are like when they crawl from their cocoons, awkward and ugly, so that we cannot see them grow, slowly stretching their wings, but see them only later, when they are fully developed, when they are able to fly. Perhaps it is necessary for a time to elapse. Perhaps, she thought, even with a moth, beauty does not come easily.

In another minute the moth reached her and began climbing up her finger, encircling it pace by pace with its six furry legs. Greta lifted her hand in the air and the moth swayed but clung tightly to her. She let the moth crawl up the back of her hand, then onto her wrist. The wings were nearly three inches long now and slowly the moth was beginning to move them. At first they lay folded limply along the moth's back. Now they were being raised above it, and spreading, fanning out, were opening, closing, opening and closing.

The wings unfolded and in the light of the bedside lamp they were luminous and multi-colored. The forward edges of the front wings, gray

and brown and spotted near their tips with pink and blue, still bore little wrinkles, and peculiar little windows were in the center of each of the wings. Each window was hardly a quarter of an inch across and each had a hairline, like a cobweb, directly through its center. They were all ringed with a fine line of yellow and the windows in the rear wings were encircled, too, with wide blue rings, outside the yellow, like bold eyes, and when Greta held the moth close to her own eyes, against the light, she could see through the little windows clearly.

Then from one hand to the other Greta carried the moth, completely free with it, letting it walk first on one palm, then on the other. She watched the wings rise and fall, and as the moth walked, its body dried in the warm air of the room. Greta stroked the moth's body, felt the soft hair there, and tickled from time to time the plump round abdomen.

For perhaps half an hour, as she sat in the middle of her bed, her feet pulled up and her nightgown around her knees, Greta played with the moth, letting it crawl on her hands. But she had lost track of the time and realized now only that she must have been awake an hour or more, maybe two. She sat relaxed on the bed, looking at the moth, and she knew she had no right now to keep it any longer. She would hate to see it go, but it had grown out of its ugliness and now it must be free. It did not belong imprisoned in the box, nor shut up in her room, nor even in her hand.

She touched the soft hair again with her finger and the wings rose up, and she saw on them, closely, as in a pattern of a million particles of colored dust, the finely wrought design of ribs and web and eyes.

Sliding from the bed, Greta carried the moth to the window and let it crawl from her hand to the sill. She thought the wings were the most beautiful things she had ever seen, and she hoped they would be strong enough. But she did not wait to see the moth go. She watched it a moment as it stood on the sill, before the open window. Then quietly she walked back to her bead. She knew she would not hear it, nor know the time, but in the morning, she knew, it would be gone.

She lay on the bed, in the soft glow of the light, thinking of what she had seen this night and in the days before. There had been the cocoon, the movement inside, the emerging of the wormish thing, the wings growing, the becoming of the moth, and the testing of the wings as it made ready to fly. She thought of the day when it all had begun, a day when she had not known what to do with herself. It was strange the way things worked out. There had been the fields stretching away, and the many barns, and between

the Fosters' and the lake the run-down house. She did not ordinarily notice things like that, and she remembered that she had felt sad for a moment then, and it might have been the first time.

And the turtles, the grass, the fern, the lake. Did anyone know all the secrets? How deep was the lake? How did turtles stay under water? How did grass grow? What made a moth fly? And why, at all, was she interested?

She lay on the bed, looking at the ceiling. She did not yet understand it all: there had been so many things.

Suddenly she threw back the covers and looked down over her figure. She pulled her nightgown up over her knees and looked at her legs. She had nice legs, she thought, although they were still a little thin. And the bones of her hips stuck out a little, too. She turned her feet sideways, toes in, and wiggled her toes. Yes, she thought, she had nice legs. Then she pulled up the covers, reached to the light and snapped it off. She lay smiling in the darkness and she felt better about a lot of things.

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Three Poems

WINTER SOLSTICE

For Ruth

Light goes. Dark and darker. What can a girl
Do when she is me? Can her mirror say
She's woman, rather than stare at the swirl
Of snow over her shoulder, at the way
A storm dumps peace over slums? If the day
Can slip in crystal shreds, just as he,
Night's nude handsome negro, for his lewd play,
Dropped his natty linen suit, why mock me?
You show what I am, too: I can see, I can see!

You, mirror, make out boy enough: breastless Ruth:
Bones, no flanks: boy enough for John. A cage,
This body, for a mad starved wish whose tooth
Gnaws an old scrap of love. John outrage
Is so empty, when you loved me, an age
Ago, in your way. I painted piecework ties
To keep you with me in this room, my cage:
So many Rousseaus, silk jungles where eyes
Glared with lusts, redrimmed from green fronds. Even your lies

Fed me: I thought we were safe here in bed,
My forests of metaphor outside there
In the world. But the world's wheeled, John; you said
Our visions walk in circles, whirl in air,
Strike down the lonely heart — as your gold hair
Struck me. John, I drove you out with no fears.
I loved you; now I come home to this lair
To find you crouched under that black who leers
At me still from darkness. My glass paints me in tears.

FROM THE HEIGHTS

For Tony, who disappeared in New York City

1

Nineteen years today. I sit under Greek
Columns on these library steps where bull
Pigeons roo-coo roo-coo at their doves. Last week
This cherry tree was my youth's mocker, full
Flowered, and night dreamed me a fiery tree
Of petals of children singing in tears
Who fell, innocents. Leaves grow. I could see
This tree rust in autumn ruins as though year's
Time had made it swarm with jewelled whirring birds,
Orange, red, who dropped from it one by one.
Rustling husks like my dreams. Birds, children: surds
Banned from a world of surds. Where can I run
From my childhood's death but to a man's despair?
That sooty gull who dabbled in the roiled
Scummed coalmudded Harlem River down there,
Antelucan scavenger, lifts his oiled
Beak as he hovers on sunwarmed thermals,
Leisured sopsearcher, wags it down at me
From flight, turns drifting fading up, signals
Me once more and slides into the sun, free.

2

I'm older than my nineteen years as I
Sneak from the Heights to catch the train downtown.
I blink rheumy amber crusts from each eye
And spit through mossed brown gapped teeth at the frown,
Like my parents', of each righteous building
On this campus busy stamping engineers,
Doctors, lawyers out of mothers' sons, grafting
Righteous men on stumps of boys for the years
To warm to wormy fruit. But I in my shame
Father unnatural heroism from
My vices, hold virtues with no other name
Than criminal between finger and thumb.

3

Tunnels descend from pillars of the El.
The subway hurls me down in my young fright.
Steel wheels screech on steel. O lump me through hell,
A wrencher of turnstiles in man's night,
Number me, nickels and dimes, flange me, flange me,
Rail the wild boy straight. Brick me in girder
Webs. Regale me in brass automats. Hold me,
Venus of kitch, in crass embrace. Murder
Me, Diana, among ashcans, your city's
Sacred grove: I have seen what I should not.
Inject me, drugged bopmen, with your furies'
Cool mad music at midnight. Let me rot,
Run with sewage from all old men's pities,
And sink with dregs at sea.

WAITING FOR LILITH

Eve is angel, though bone of bone. She is
The wealth of women, she makes my garden
Love's maze, all flesh and fruit; the sweat of bliss

Is dew upon our bellies. She is the warden
Of this world, and its colors speck her eyes,
As richest soil her hair. Fear can't burden

Her heart, silver under breasts of gold: cries
From dispossessed night burnish her sweet sleep.
Yet, I hear them from Eden, where wind sighs

Over the ruined metropolis. She will keep
Vigil in her wastes, mounting those old towers
To count deserts of stars, course dead moons, and weep

The dust from her black sloe eyes. These dark hours
Are yours, Lilith, my demon wife before time,
Yours my years before the sun, my powers

Knotted in your long black hair. Steps that climb
To Eden lead down again. Heirs of blood
May walk in the shade with Eve, giants prime

Yoking the mammoth mountains to her good
Will, and farming men in her big daughters.
They may stretch their dominion over the flood

Of time, and crown Eve mother of waters,
But, Lilith, your song rises with the stones' curse
At night, and I turn to hear you. No laughters
Of sons, no wife from my bone, can drown your voice.

Jascha Kessler

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COUSIN BASILIO, by Eca de Queiros. Translated by Roy Campbell. British Book Service. $3.00.

Dickens — with a difference. Instead of fog, sun ; in place of an ugly villain, a handsome one ; and the great ant-heap of London gives way to nineteenth century loitering and devout Lisbon. It is before the eager and passionate eyes of this city that our heroine is seduced and captivated by florid Cousin Basilio —' She noticed his horseshoe tie-pin flashing from his black satin cravat and his silk socks embroidered with stars. Certainly Brazil had not vulgarized him.' As the street goggles and calculates, our heroine, her soul afire with sensual anticipation (another unDickensian touch) hurries off to the arms of her lover to be ' seized with ardour and kissed . . . on the face, the neck and even on the hat.' This while her honest husband is off earning his living in the remote district of Alentejo. Finally the street watches the blackmailing servant and then her unfortunate mistress succumb, the first to a heart attack and the second to that most devastating of Victorian diseases, remorse.

But this leaves us behind with our book. Why Dickens? Because in Cousin Basilio we meet as convincing a collection of grotesques as any since Mrs. Gamp took a medicinal drop or Samuel Weller Senior held forth against the evils of tea. It may be true that Cousin Basilio succeeds more with his Luiza than he does with us, but it is impossible to resist Dona Felicidada de Noronha who is in love with the Councillor because of the extraordinary beauty of his baldness, or this latter who always straightened in his chair when he said, ' The King,' or Juliao who had the habit of sneering so ingrained in him that when success came at last, he sneered at that as well. Some are present for only a page like Senhora Marguerite, a layer-out of bodies and an artist who preferred corpses of eighteen years or so, and some are a part of the plot, but all enliven, enrich and, above all, make loud the pages of this book.

No one is ever alone. Juliana, the blackmailing maid, is still warm in her coffin when the local cobbler and the street's emissary, is presenting his commiserations ; and swift upon the heels of our heroine's death pour in the goggling, weeping, advising friends. So our hero, heroine and villain play their parts upon their bright little stage before an audience of Lisbonese and, if from time to time they bore us, we can turn to enjoy our neighbours in the crowd.

Of the three central characters, it is with Luiza that de Queiros

succeeds most. We can have no confidence in Basilio who, in jewelled socks, orders a sherry as he hears of Luiza's death and we suspect that Jorge, the husband, will forget and remarry. But Luiza is something of a creation. Here she is, blonde and sensual, taken in by her aristocratic cousin from Brazil, bewildered and frightened by her blackmailing maid, in love with her husband when he returns all the more for her guilt and his innocence, and perversely dying (possibly, not quite successfully) when the danger of blackmail is at last gone forever. Obviously complicated and tenderly conceived.

It is with the hot colours of the theatre that the backdrops are painted — in the luminescent pinks, blues and greens of semi-tropical Portugal. No doubt we owe these as much to Mr. Roy Campbell as to de Queiros. If this reviewer is not competent to judge the accuracy of the translation, he hastens to add that he is more than content with its artistry.

NEUFVILLE SHAW

THREE ELEGIES OF QUINTILIUS, by Peter Russell. The Pound Press. 26 pp. 12/6.

Ominous parallels between the present state of Europe and its condition in the fifth century when the Roman Empire was crumbling away have disturbed many readers of history. Peter Russell has cast these dark apprehensions into the form of three *Elegies of Quintilius.* These are elegies primarily in Ovid's sense, comparatively short poems of personal experience and emotion in a non-lyric metre ; but with something of the regret and melancholy that has come into the English use of the term. This, too, and indeed the dramatic monologue form, could be paralleled in Ovid, a poet in whom Mr. Russell is particularly interested.

The poems however are not merely skilful exercises in an antique form. They have a direct and convincing immediacy that makes a reader contemporary with the moods and mode of life of a young poet, sensual, scholarly, disillusioned, resigned and rather ineffective, sustained more by dreams than by hopes in a dwindling and coarsening world of Vandals, bureaucrats and vulgarians. Their movement is easy and melodious, the imagery apt and direct ; the style is deliberately intelligible without loss either of emotion or of elevation. Quintilius' muse rises from familiar trivialities at the beginning to loftier measures with a dexterous use of

extended passages from Virgil's Georgics. Thus the troubled times that accompanied the transition from smaller states to world empire, and the first movement from local paganisms to an ecumenical religion, are brought into relation with the breakdown of this order under internal and external strains, and both into implicit relation with our own time, not in general, abstract terms, but in the imaginative portrayal of individual human experience.

L. A. MacKay

CHIPS FROM MY CHISEL, by Grace H. Turnbull. Richard R. Smith, Inc., West Rindge, New Hampshire. 256 pp. $5.00.

Grace Turnbull, born in Baltimore in 1880 of one of the fine old families of that city and region, lives in a modestly spacious house in the town's best residential section. Embedded in the very structure of the house are wood sculptures, mainly religious in motif, by her own hand. Other sculptures of birds and beasties and persons are analogously embedded in the garden, at once restful and luxuriant, which its owner carefully tends and restrains. At early dawn this rather small person may be found at work, in a study with a bell tower which suggests a chapel, shaping sculptures, often of vast dimensions. When she goes abroad it is in simple attire and without make-up, and driving a popular model car of ancient vintage. She gives much quiet assistance and support to workers in the arts and in intellectual life. She is convincedly opposed to alcohol as the root cause of most human ills, attends meetings to combat its spread and writes letters, as occasion offers, to the Baltimore *Sun,* attacking the evil. These activities do not make her popular in all quarters, and are not entirely approved by those liberals she joins as a leader in the fight against racial discrimination and for racial and religious tolerance. In her sparè hours she translates and writes.

Chips From My Chisel is one product of those hours. It is the fascinating record, amply supported by quotations from her contemporary letters and diaries and richly illustrated with photographs of her own sculpture, of the growth and adventures of a manifestly unusual person who, born in a city still noted for its conservatism and in a generation when it was still unusual for women of good family to make careers, especially in the arts, managed, on the basis of a conviction that it was vital to use and develop talent, and as a result of profound concern for the unfortunate and a rooted sense of need for justice and decency in society, to break with the established

pattern without breaking with a loved family and with friends. Miss Turnbull followed her own design firmly and intrepidly, overcame frustrations and resistances, yet remained a part of her society firmly attached to its useful and usable conventions where these did not interfere with, inhibit, or combat clear commitment to and expression of deeper sensibilities and duties. Thereby she avoided bohemianism, power of self-conscious revolt, escapism, the resentment of maladjustment, and the distractions of imperative self-justification. Having character, she became a character, while at the same time doing her job and pursuing her calling. She tells of her life with humor and charm, and at times a good deal of amusement. She speaks of her principled undertakings with intransigeant conviction.

The record ranges from a hardly-won classical education; through her early undertakings in art; her first public successes; her travels as a young artist in Europe; her determined fight to get back to Europe during the first world war, and her final success in joining the Red Cross; her still more determined contact with the realities, not indeed of battle, but of the battlefield, and her concern with the doughboy rather than with the officer; her further travels and painting in the West Indies; her remarkable penetration into the less accessible fastnesses of the Grand Canyon, and her contact with the Navaho Indians; her prison work and her concern at once to combat crime and to aid unfortunate criminals; her collection and publication under the title *Tongues of Fire* of great passages of similar sentiment in the scriptures of all peoples; her interest in Plotinus and her careful collection, selection and publication of a handy single volume of previously unavailable selections from his work; her part in the peace struggle; further travels abroad, including a visit to the Holy Land; her earnest efforts to promote devotion to art in her own city and also to aid in developing its musical life; and her sympathetic interest in and understanding for the animal kingdom, whose various members, not excluding snakes, have produced much of her best sculpture.

Her book makes fascinating reading, the more so since feminine autobiographies, especially in the United States, are not too frequent, while too many are records either of single devotions or of contacts with the great and near-great in public and intellectual life, with gossip about them. While Miss Turnbull has known her share of distinguished people, who enter indeed into her pages, the dominant interest of her book is in her person, her alert style, and the many enterprises of a busy life centered in art, yet full of vibrant persons, principled concern with public questions, and packed with

interesting reflections and observations on diverse humanity, its ultimate goods, and the meaning of the human lot. In the realms of culture and social enterprise serious individualists who are prepared quietly and sustainedly to think and act otherwise, without dramatic rebellion; and who, without being great geniuses, use their endowment of talents to the full, are scarce. They are also valuable for their transforming conservation of our heritage, for their firm stand against the levelling downward of mass man; and for their liberal and symbolic protest against that general danger, peculiarly conspicuous among the established and influential leadership groups in our society, of forgetfulness to be persons. And indeed in many ways Miss Turnbull appears as a stray and misplaced person who has belatedly survived the great days of Transcendentalist ferment and its long New England Summer. For she is a radical conservative who would liberate and conserve the best in our moral and aesthetic heritage, and would add to it. Her enemies, too, are merely constricting convention, with its unworthy emulations, and a materialism which saps integrity and blunts perception.

THOMAS I. COOK

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